

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 00927 040841Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 AID-05 MC-02 IGA-02
EB-07 COME-00 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /115 W
-----041011Z 070011 /16

R 040748Z JUN 77
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4629
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0927

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR IZ XJ
SUBJECT: IRAQI POLICY TOWARD HORN OF AFRICA

REF: BAGHDAD 433

1. IRAQI GOVERNMENT HAS RECENTLY MOVED TO CLARIFY ITS
POSITION TOWARD HORN OF AFRICA AND TO REAFFIRM ITS
SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE OF ERITREA. FOR AT LEAST SEVERAL
YEARS, GOI HAS BEEN MAKING PUBLIC CLAIMS OF SUPPORT FOR
ERITREANS, ALTHOUGH IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN VAGUE ABOUT DETAILS.
SOMALI EMBOFF HAS CONFIRMED THAT BOTH ELF AND PLF NOW HAVE
OFFICES HERE, AND EMBOFF EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT BOTH
MOVEMENTS RECEIVE HEAVY IRAQI FINANCIAL AID IF NOT ACTUAL
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PAGE 02 BAGHDA 00927 040841Z

MILITARY EQUIPMENT. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY USINT (REFTEL),
IRAQI MILITARY PERSONNEL MAY EVEN BE INVOLVED IN SOME
TRAINING ACTIVITIES.

2. GROWING RADICALIZATION OF ETHIOPIAN REGIME, SOVIET
SUPPORT OF THAT GOVERNMENT AND EMERGENCE OF CONSERVATIVE
ARAB SUPPORT FOR ERITREANS MUST HAVE GIVEN BAGHDAD

CAUSE FOR REFLECTION. NONETHELESS, GOI NOW SEEMS READY TO UNDERCUT APPARENT SOVIET POLICY IN HORN, EVEN AT RISK OF ADDING THIS ISSUE TO DIFFERENCES OVER MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT AND SYRIA AS POTENTIAL SOURCES OF SOVIET-IRAQI FRICTION. ATTACKS ON THE ADDIS REGIME ARE EASY ENOUGH (GENOCIDE IS THE COMMON CHARGE), BUT OPEN CRITICISM OF SOVIET UNION IS ALWAYS RARE IN IRAQ'S CAREFULLY CONTROLLED MEDIA. IRAQIS WERE THUS QUICK TO TAKE NOTE WHEN BAATH PARTY WEEKLY AL-RASID PUBLISHED SIDE BY SIDE ON ITS FRONT PAGE OF MAY 8 A HARSH CRITIQUE OF ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND A STRAIGHT NEWS ITEM ON SOVIET AID TO ETHIOPIA.

3. IRAQ TOOK ANOTHER STEP BY DECLARING ITS RESERVATION ON THE TRIPOLI ISLAMIC CONFERENCE RESOLUTION DEALING WITH ERITREA. IRAQI DELEGATION MADE CLEAR THAT IT VIEWED ERITREAN PEOPLE NOT AS AN OPPRESSED MUSLIM MINORITY BUT AS A NATION OF BOTH CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS SEEKING TO REGAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE FROM THE ETHIOPIAN EMPIRE. GOI DOUBTLESS HOPES TO INCREASE THE WEIGHT OF LEFTIST ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT, BUT ITS DISMAL RECORD OF FAILURE TO EXPORT IRAQI STYLE IDEOLOGY SUGGESTS THAT IS MAY ONLY MANAGE TO BROADEN THE BASE OF ARAB SUPPORT FOR AN INDEPENDENT ERITREA.
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